

TREATY BODY MONITOR

International Service for Human Rights



Human Rights Monitor Series

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS 38TH SESSION, 30 APRIL – 18 MAY 2007 OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

Introduction.....	1
Main themes and issues of the session.....	1
Finland.....	1
Hungary.....	2
Latvia.....	2
Nepal.....	2
Netherlands Antilles.....	3

Introduction

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the Committee) held its 38th session in Geneva from 30 April – 18 May 2007. It considered the periodic State Party reports of Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Nepal and the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Netherlands Antilles) under the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (the Covenant).

Main themes and issues of the session

The main themes and issues of the session were: the status of the Covenant in national law; equality and non-discrimination, including on the basis of caste; the rights to education, physical and mental health and health services, housing, food and water, an adequate standard of living, employment and minimum wage, cultural life, and social security; and the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children, migrants, internally displaced persons, Roma and other minorities, indigenous peoples, refugees, asylum-seekers and non-nationals.

Finland - 5th periodic report

The Committee welcomed its positive and constructive dialogue with Finland during the examination of the State Party's 5th periodic report, noting Finland's strong progress since its last examination. More prominent discussion addressed the rights of the indigenous Sámi and minority Roma populations, the gender pay gap, the availability of adequate health services in remote areas, and the measures taken by the State to combat trafficking and violence against women.

International Service for Human Rights, 1 Rue de Varembé, P. O. Box 16, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Ph: +41 22 7335123, Fax: +41 22 7330826

E-mail: information@ishr.ch, Website: www.ishr.ch/hrm/TMBs

Other issues addressed by the Committee included: the status of the Covenant in national law; Finland's health and education systems; employment with particular regard to the absence of a national minimum wage; the universality of Finland's social security system; the rights to food and housing; the equality of women in public life and the workplace; child poverty; and immigration and asylum policy.

The non-governmental organisation (NGO) Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children submitted a parallel report to the Committee.

Finland is to submit its 6th periodic report to the Committee by 30 June 2010.

Hungary – 3rd periodic report

The Committee welcomed its open and constructive dialogue with Hungary during its examination of the State Party's 3rd periodic report. The examination covered a variety of issues, including: the status of the Covenant in national law; the equality of women in public life and the workplace; the rights of the Roma population, with particular regard to health, housing, employment and education; trafficking in women and girls; and the availability of mental health care programmes and services.

Parallel reports were submitted to the Committee by NGOs including the European Roma Rights Centre and the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children.

In its concluding observations the Committee asked Hungary to include a specific section in its next periodic report on the results of the measures taken to combat discrimination and enhance respect, protection and fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights of the Roma under each of the Covenant rights.

Hungary is to submit its combined 4th, 5th and 6th periodic reports to the Committee by 30 June 2009.

Latvia - initial report

The Committee welcomed its first dialogue with Latvia, examining the State Party's initial report. The comprehensive examination addressed: the status of the Covenant in national law; the rights of non-citizens, asylum seekers and refugees; the principle of non-discrimination in national law; trafficking in women and children; anti-corruption measures; physical and mental health, education, employment, and standard of living (including homelessness); and language and culture with specific regard to Latvian minorities.

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children submitted a parallel report to the Committee. Latvia is to submit its combined 2nd, 3rd and 4th periodic reports to the Committee by 30 June 2009.

Nepal – 2nd periodic report

The Committee welcomed its constructive dialogue with Nepal during the examination of the State Party's 2nd periodic report. Particular emphasis was placed on the challenges linked to Nepal's political instability and civil war, and the reforms introduced following the Nepal Peace Accord. The Committee conceded that Nepal's efforts to comply with the Covenant are impeded by its large numbers of victims and internally displaced persons, damaged infrastructure, and lack of goods and services.

Other issues addressed by the Committee included: the status of the Covenant in national law; the independence of the judiciary; the role of Nepal's national human rights commission; caste-based discrimination; the payment of compensation to victims of the conflict; physical and mental health, education,

employment, and the right to food and water; the rights of women and trafficking in women and girls; bonded labour; and the rights of minorities, migrant workers, refugees and Nepal's rural population.

NGO parallel reports were submitted to the Committee by the Centre for Reproductive Rights, the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Coordination Committee, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the International Campaign for Tibet, the Lutheran World Federation, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and Rights & Democracy and FIAN International.

In its concluding observations the Committee asked Nepal to include a specific section in its next periodic report on the results of the measures it has taken to combat discrimination and enhance respect, protection and fulfilment of all economic, social and cultural rights.

Nepal is to submit its 3rd periodic report to the Committee by 30 June 2011.

Netherlands Antilles – 4th periodic report

The Committee acknowledged the effort invested by the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the examination of its 4th periodic report on the Netherlands Antilles. The Netherlands Antilles is an autonomous part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The issues addressed by the Committee included: the status of the Covenant in the Netherlands Antilles; the legislative, institutional and practical measures in place to combat discrimination (particularly against persons with disabilities and migrant children); inequality in the provision of social services; gender equality; employment with particular regard to minimum wage; child welfare with regard to the high incidence of abortion among teenagers and the sexual exploitation of children; the rights to education, housing, cultural life and an adequate standard of living; drug abuse, trafficking in persons, and the legal protection of sex workers; national debt; and the access of refugees to basic resources.

The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children submitted a parallel report to the Committee.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is to submit its 4th periodic report on all of the territories under its jurisdiction, including the Netherlands Antilles, to the Committee by 30 June 2008.

Last revised and updated: 30 October 2007.

TREATY BODY MONITOR STAFF

Gareth Sweeney, Deputy Manager, Geneva
Eléonore Dziurzynski, Communications Officer, Geneva
Michelle Evans, Representative to the UN, New York
Michael Ineichen, Human Rights Officer, Geneva
Benjamin Lee, Human Rights Officer, Geneva

AUTHOR OF THE OVERVIEW REPORT

Benjamin Lee, Human Rights Officer, Geneva

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

The *Treaty Body Monitor* forms part of the Human Rights Monitor Series produced by ISHR. It reports on each country reviewed by the six treaty bodies (all but the Committee on the Rights of the Child) and provides an overview of every treaty body session. It is currently an online publication that can be found at <http://www.ishr.ch/hrm/TMBs>.

COMMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

We would welcome your feedback on this publication so please send any comments and suggestions to information@ishr.ch. You can check the latest Treaty Body Monitor reports published on <http://www.ishr.ch/hrm/TMBs>.

COPYRIGHT AND DISTRIBUTION

Copyright © 2007 International Service for Human Rights

Material from this publication may be reproduced for training, teaching or other non-commercial purposes as long as ISHR is fully acknowledged. You can also distribute this publication and link to it from your website as long as ISHR is fully acknowledged as the source. No part of this publication may be reproduced for any commercial purpose without the prior express permission of the copyright holders.

DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information contained in this publication, ISHR does not guarantee, and accepts no legal liability whatsoever arising from any possible mistakes in the information reported on or any use of this publication. We are however happy to correct any errors you may come across so please notify information@ishr.ch.